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# GRADUATE SCHOOL

EDUCATION FOR A  
STRONGER NATION

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*Newsletter*

April 15, 1963

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 7 Faculty Luncheon - Honorable Francis Keppel, U. S. Commissioner of Education

May 27-June 1 Registration for Summer Session

### Poets of the Human Adventure

A fresh and stimulating approach to our ambivalence toward aesthetics and utility was brought to the final public lecture in the Graduate School's 1963 series, *Critical Issues and Decisions*, when William Birenbaum presented a paper entitled "The Poetry of Discovery," on March 14. Dr. Birenbaum is Dean of the New School for Social Research, New York City. His concluding remarks contain a suggestion of a prophecy:

"In an automated, highly organized, urban epoch, the human capacity to know beauty may turn out to be the quality most useful to the maintenance of sanity. On a crowded and explosive planet the aesthetic wells of the human mind may be the most precious reservoirs of the human spirit. In a day-to-day life of traffic jams, assembly lines, shortened work-hours, and enlarged purchasing power, the cultivation and nourishment of the artistic impulse in every man may be the most practical and promising of all human pursuits.

"Indeed, in the context of modern life, the futility of utility as we now see it, becomes increasingly apparent. The great revolutions of the Twentieth Century do not have to do with the rise and fall of governments, but with the fall of man's traditional view of his limitations, and the rise of a renewed elaboration of his possibilities. Each new discovery cries out for poetic description. We may be the lucky ones. We may be the poets of the human adventure."

### Parade of Faculty Talent

Five faculty members shared the secrets of their successful teaching experience with Graduate School co-teachers at our monthly Faculty Luncheon on April 2. The panel proved to be one of exceptional interest to the capacity audience attending. Both informative and inspirational, each of the five members of the panel kept us constantly alert during the off-the-cuff remarks and demonstrations presented.

Our panel consisted of the following teachers, with the subject each teaches indicated: Olga Moore Arnold, Fiction Writing; Jack S. Ellenberger, Law Librarianship; Herbert G. Persil, Federal Budgetary Procedure: Execution and Fund Control; Lionel Tsao, Mandarin Chinese; and Benjamin H. Alexander, Organic Chemistry.

### How to Learn to Write

Mrs. Arnold told us how she brings out the creative talent of students who register for her courses in Fiction Writing and Advanced Fiction Writing. She starts by telling them all the things they should not do. From then on she proceeds on the theory that nobody knows whether he can write till he tries it. So her students are put to work writing -- writing, in considerable degree, for "readers" who are their class contemporaries. Students learn by class participation, simply trying out their written work on other students in the class. The open comment that follows brings out the good and the bad. Laymen are the best judge of fiction, short story, book, play, or poem, -- laymen rather than experts, according to Mrs. Arnold. She made a special point of the fact that nobody can regiment the imagination; after all there are only 36 plots from the ancient Greeks to 1963. So the teacher's primary function is to stimulate the student's creative talent. Mrs. Arnold is an Information Specialist with the U.S. Information Agency.

### Research in Law

Mr. Ellenberger applies the workshop approach to his course in Law Librarianship, a field that has grown immensely in recent years. It touches every phase of human endeavor, according to Mr. Ellenberger, who recalled, as an example, a research job in machine industry he was assigned to do when he was connected with a New York law firm. He is now Librarian for the Bar Association of the District of Columbia. His course in the Graduate School is offered for the first time by him this semester. Previously, Mr. Ellenberger confessed, he had never taught anything but swimming. Mr. Ellenberger uses audio-visual record and film strip in reviewing actual law cases for his class. His students learn case law and legislative research functions, and they are integrated into Federal statutory law, administrative law, even international law.

### Budgetary Problems

Mr. Persil has a class that represents a wide range of educational background and Civil Service classification, from high school graduates and GS-4's to

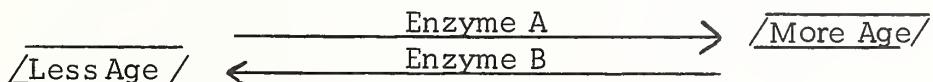
holders of graduate degrees and GS-14's. Mr. Persil has his class take over budgetary problems only after initial appropriations have been made, then his students solve actual problems in agency appropriation and distribution of funds. They bring to class reports on what is actually happening in their agencies. Each is required to write a term paper on fund control based on these observations. Mr. Persil is Budget Analyst in the Division of Estimates and Allotments, USDA Office of Budget and Finance.

#### Chinese Isn't Easy

Mr. Tsao puts emphasis on reading, not speaking, in his courses in Mandarin Chinese, but the first semester is devoted to speaking because that is fundamental. After four semesters a student can read a Chinese newspaper with the aid of a dictionary. Mr. Tsao thinks most Chinese scholars stress characters too much, and should place more emphasis on words. To read contemporary Chinese one will need a knowledge of from 200 to 250 characters, but to read very well mastery of 1,500 to 2,000 characters is required. To learn Chinese, strict discipline is required, and a student "should know English better than well," and knowledge of Latin is helpful. The range of Chinese characters is less now than formerly, but the language is becoming poorer as a result, according to Mr. Tsao. He is a Fellow in the Royal Asiatic Society, and he has taught Chinese at Harvard.

#### Chemistry Is Fun

Dr. Alexander demonstrated how he teaches Organic Chemistry without a laboratory, entirely with lectures and demonstrations. It is a subject, according to Dr. Alexander, that everybody should study because of its universal application to life. In his presentation, he interspersed demonstrations with anecdotes taken from real life. He showed us how a delayed bomb will explode, by adding a drop of glycerin to a small quantity of potassium permanganate -- the mixture flared up about three minutes after he set it aside for the delayed reaction. Then he took a beaker of sodium hydroxide, a colorless liquid, and added another clear liquid, phenolphthalein, the combination turning to a blood red color. Dr. Alexander said a man confessed to a murder when told he would be proved guilty if the mixture "turned to blood." Finally, Dr. Alexander put forward the promise that chemical research might some day succeed in reversing the aging process. Then, instead of getting older year by year, we will reverse the process and start getting younger. This is the way he illustrates the processes:



Faculty Photographer Takes Photo

After the five lectures and demonstrations, Mr. Tsao showed how to write:

AGRICULTURE  
DEPARTMENT  
LECTURE

in Mandarin Chinese on the blackboard, and the group was photographed by still another faculty member, Walter N. Johnson, who teaches Practice of Photography in the Graduate School. In the accompanying picture you see, from left to right, Dr. Alexander, Mr. Persil, Mrs. Arnold, Mr. Tsao, Mr. Ellenberger.



Congratulate the Coopers!

Our Administrative Officer, Ruth O. Carlock, surprised all of us with the announcement of her marriage on Saturday, March 30, in Arlington, Va., to William A. Cooper, Assistant Manager of the USDA Cafeterias. We received the announcement in the form of a telegram from Florida, where the Coopers are honeymooning. The Faculty and Staff of the Graduate School join in wishing our dear friends the Coopers happiness, felicity, and long life together.

Sincerely,

*John B. Holden*  
John B. Holden, Director